चल रहे हैं, सेक्रेटरीज़ उतने ही चल रहे हैं जितने पहले चलते थे, इसका मतलब क्या हुआ ?

Does it mean that all the purposals made by Ministers and Secretaries, in regard to foreign travel, are accepted by the Prime Minister? Is that so? (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 83.

SHRI ASHIS SEN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, with your permission, may I ask a question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have called Question No. 83.

India's share in the global tea trade

*83. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's share in the global tea trade has dropped drastically from 28 per cent in 1981-82 to about 18 per cent at present; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons for this decline and what steps Government are taking to promote export of tea?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Exports of tea from India during the period 1981-82 to 1990-91 is as given below:—

Qty. in million Kgs.
Value in Rs. Crores

Year	Export	
	Qty.	Value
1981-82	224.20	406.83
1982-83	194.09	369.45
1983-84	202.31	557.55
1984-85	217.40	771.38
1985-86	214.23	647.98
1986-87	196.23	579.48
1987-88	201.83	627.76
1988-89	204.81	641.87
1989-90	211.76	911.38
1990-91	199.16	1070.15

While the quantity of exports has remained more or less stagnant, India's share in the global tea exports has declined from about 28 per cent in 1981 to about 18 per cent in 1991. The main reasons for this decline have been the increasing domestic demand as well as the severe competition from other countries like Sri Lanka, Kenya, Indonesia and China.

The Government have taken a number of steps to increase domestic tea production with a view to increasing availability for exports. These include bringing new areas under tea plantation, increasing the pace of replantation, use of improved cultural practices, etc.

For promotion of exports of Indian tea, the Assam and Darjeeling Tea Logo Campaigns have been launched in UK and a Brand Promotion Scheme has been in operation. Apart from this, various incentives like full excise duty rebate on loose tea exports, duty drawback on packaging materials facility of exim scrip, etc. have been extended.

SHRI P. UPENDRA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very happy that the hon. Minister has admitted the fact that Indian tea exports are declining. Indian tea has always been the hot favourite all over the world. But India is now gradually losing ground in regard to this trade. While countries like China, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Indonesia and Bangladesh are forging ahead to grab newer tea markets, we are losing ground. One reason appears to be that our tea exports, so far, have been unidirectional. I understand, about 135 million kg. out of a total of 200 million kg. of tea exported, have been going only to the erstwhile Soviet Union. When in December last, the Soviet Union stopped buying tea in the Indian auctions, we got a knock.

There is also the restrictive export policy because we have to keep in mind the interests of the domestic consumers also as tea is the common man's beverage. Today, the domestic consumption is growing at the rate of 4 per cent as against 2.58 per cent increase in production. Is

the Government reexamining the entire tea export policy, to augment foreign exchange earnings on the one side and, at the same time, keeping the interests of the domestic consumers on the other?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Sir, as I have already mentioned in the statement, our tea exports are declining not because production of tea has not increased in the country. We are the largest producer of tea. Production of tea increased at the rate of, approximately, 2.58 per cent in the last decade, that is the eighties. Unfortunately, consumption has grown at a much faster rate, i.e., 4.60 per cent. It is not possible to deny to our people tea at fair price. We have a large population. Tea is a poor man's drink. Substantial part of our production will indeed go for domestic consumption. But hitherto, the policy has been, 'produce what you can, consume what you will and export what remains.' We have changed that. I have made it very clear that we must have a minimum quantity for export. We have fixed it at approximately 250,000 tonnes to be reached in the next couple of years. This year, for example, we will go back to the higher level of export. We will produce about 740 million kgs. We will export about 210 or 211 million kgs. By the year 2000 we hope to produce 1,000 million kgs and export about 280 million kgs. It is not possible to go beyond that level because substantial part of India's tea production would have to go to the Indian people.

SHRI P. UPENDRA: I have myself said that tea is the common man's beverage and interest of the consumer must be kept in view. but keeping that in view I asked the Minister, what is the reorientation in the export policy? Anyhow that is another factor. Now the Minister said that we are the largest producer of tea. I do not know whether it is correct because till a few decades ago we were producing half of world's tea and today our percentage of world's tea production is only 22 per cent. I do not know whether we are exploring the possibility of finding new acreage for tea production. In one of the questions which was answered today by the Minister, Unstarred Question No. 763, it has been said, there is a possibility of growing tea in Orissa. Already, some acres have been identified in Keonjhar, Kalahandi and Phulbani districts of Orissa. Is there any possibility of finding out similar acreages which are suitable for tea cultivation in other States? Have you examined that possibility? If so, which are the States where these possibilities exist?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Wes, Sir. I said that our target is 1000 kgs. by the year 2000 which obviously means that we have to extend the acreage where tea can be grown. Orissa and North East have been identified as areas where we can find more land. I have had discussions with the West Bengal Minister. He has promised to make available more land. Tamil Nadu has offered more land. Kerala has not been able to offer more land. We are looking for more areas where tea can be grown. I have asked the Tea Board to get in touch with the State Governments to ask for more land. Orissa is a prime candidate for expansion.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Mr. Chairman, Sir. one of the main reasons for export of our tea is that our Darjeeling and Assam tea is very much liked in foreign countries, but some of the other countries in the name of Darjeeling and Assam are selling bad tea and that is the reason why our export of tea is going down.

Sir, I am happy that the Government has now launched a 'Darjeeling and Assam Tea Logo' campaign. I would like to know the result of this campaign. When we held discussions with the Tea Board, we found that our popular tea was sold by other countries in the name of Assam and Darjeeling tea. So. after the scheme has been launched. what is the increase in our export of tea, what is the result?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: We have just launched the campaign. We have three kinds of tea in India, Darjeeling, Assam and Neelgiri. The scheme that has been launched is that India produces all kinds of tea. It is a multi-media campaign. In Europe, of course, Derjeeling and Assam

tea are the more popular ones. It is true that other countries are plagiarizing the name of Derjeeding. Sir, in GATT one of the new rules that has been agreed upon is that names which indicate country of origin cannot be used or plagiarized by any other country. For example, no one in the world can use 'Champagne' for sparkling wine. Similarly, nobody in the world can use 'Darjeeling' when the new GATT rules come into force. But the GATT rules have not yet come into force. We have joined the effort in making this rule. Once the rule comes into force, no other country would be able to use the name of Darjeeling.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: What is the result of the campaign?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: We have just launched the campaign. It is too early to assess its impact.

SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN: Sir, I want to know which are the countries which are the main competitors with India in the foreign market. This is part (a) of my question.

Part (b) is that there are some sick tea gardens in our own country. What steps does the Government propose to take to rejuvenate those tea gardens?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, the main competitors for our high quality tea are China, Kenya and Indonesia. The main competitor for our low quality tea is Sri Lanka.

As far as sick tea gardens are concerned, in the last session of Parliament in this House I had given the figures of the number of sick gardens. We have a rehabilitation plan. Every sick tea garden owner has been told to come and avail of the rehabilitation plan. Since these tea gardens are owned by private persons, it is for them to come to the Tea Board and apply for rehabilitation loan and rehabilitation assistance. We are willing, and let me repeat it, we are willing to assist in the rehabilitation of every sick tea garden in the country.

श्री रजनी रंजन साहू : सभापति महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने बताया कि उत्पादन बढ़ा है और उपभोक्ता भी बढ़े हैं । पर ग्लोबल टी एक्सपोर्ट डिक्लाइन हुआ है । इसके आंकड़े इन्होंने दिये हैं । निर्यात कम होने का मुख्य कारण जो टी बोर्ड के दफ्तर हैं विदेशों में, उनकी अकर्मण्यता है । यदि टी बोर्ड के दफ्तर सही काम नहीं कर रहे हैं तो उनको मजबूत करने के लिए मंत्री महोदय की क्या योजना है यह मैं जानना चाहूंगा ।

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, our exports have not declined; our exports are stagnant. We have not been able to make available exportable surpluses because of the high domestic consumption. From this year onwards we have made it very clear that whatever be the domestic consumption we must aim for a higher level of exports. That is why I indicated this year we would export 210 million kg. as against last year's 199 million kg. By the year 2000 we hope to achieve 280 to 290 million kg., which means every year we will add about 10 million kg. additional export.

As far as the offices abroad are concerned, there the four offices abroad, at New York, Brussels, Dubai and London. Subject to financial constraints, I will explore the possibility of opening more offices. But what is important is not more offices but making more exportable surpluses available for export.

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Those offices are also required.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Sir, to promote the tea trade, actually we have to produce more tea. In Tamil Nadu at Ooty or the Ooty Hills more than 40,000 small cultivators are engaged in this tea production. There is some peculiar problem prevailing there. Nearly 40 million kg. of tea is being produced at Ooty by small land-holders. Three lakh persons are dependent upon this tea cultivation. What is happening is that bulk purchasers are purchasing the tea at auctions, but they are co-operating and collaborating with

each other, and they are purchasing only at the rate of Rs. 20 per kg. from manufacturing factories. Even in auctions they are making arrangements in such a way. What is the problem?

To manufacture one kg. of saleable tea, four kg. of tea leaf is necessary. Now at Ooty the green leaf is being sold at the rate of Rs. 4.50 per kg. The total cost of one kg. of saleable tea is Rs. 27, but it is being sold at Rs. 20 because of the actually unhealthy practice indulged in by the traders.

I am also told that already a committee came here and has submitted a memorandum. I want to know whether the Government would issue an order thereby fixing the minimum sale price as Rs. 40 per kg. so that small cultivators in Ooty can be protected.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, it is not possible to fix minimum sale price. Tea is sold in auction and our tea prices are to be competitive with the world prices. As it is the unit value of the Indian tea is higher than the unit value of tea from Kenya and other countries. It is not possible to artificially jack up the prices by fixing minimum prices. These are not functional ways of promoting tea. But let me clarify. Hon Member's figures do not conform to the figures that I have. In the South of India there are three auction centres—Cochin, Coimbatore and Coonoor. Let me assume he is interested in the Coonoor or Coimbatore prices. For example, in Coimbatore auction the prices in 1992 from January 4 to February 25 ranged from 28.59, 32.24, 21.48, 30.74, 31.62, 29.50, 29.78. It is not correct to say the prices are Rs. 20.

Setting up of a gas based power project at Kathalguri

*84. DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) by when the work of setting up of a gas based power project at kothalguri will be started;

(b) what amount has been allocated for the project;

(c) what amount of power would it generate; and

(d) what is the target date of commissioning this project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) The work on setting up of Gas Based Power Project at Kathalguri has already started and infrastrucural development works are in progress.

(b) An allocation of Rs. 90 crores exists during 1991-92 for the project.

(c) The Project will have an installed generating capacity of 290 MW of power.

(d) The first unit of the Project is envisage for commissioning in April 1994 and the last unit by August, 1995.

DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: The reply given by the hon. Minister seems to be very positive, but unhappy part of the whole affair is that the work on the project are progressing only on files, not in the field. I myself visited the area and found that only boundary walls are standing there. Therefore, I want to know from the hon. Minister categorically—as he has stated in the reply—what infrastructural development work have been completed there and what amount of money has been spent for the development work on the project.

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: This year Rs. 90 crores has been allocated for infrastructural facilities. Just now the letter of intent has been issued to the BHEL and the Mitsubishi company. The detailed project report is likely to be prepared and the work will start in full swing in the month of April.

DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: It is not a satisfactory reply at all. (*Interruptions*) The Minister has stated clearly that infrastructural development work has